

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 002670

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ORIGIN SS-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /011 R

66619

DRAFTED BY EA/PDELVECCHIO:SB

APPROVED BY EA:MR HELBLE

S/S:PSHANKLE

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R 070059Z JAN 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 002670

EXDIS

MILITARY COMMANDS HANDLE AS SPECATE EXCLUSIVE

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

THE FOLLOWING IS A REPEAT OF PHNOM PENH

0249 ACTION SECSTATE 05 JANUARY 1975. QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 0249

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ORFP, CB

SUBJ: SENATOR THURMOND'S VISIT TO PHNOM PENH

1. VISIT OF SENATORS THURMOND AND SCOTT ON JANUARY 4 TO PHNOM PENH WENT WELL. IT WAS FIRST VISIT BY AMERICAN SENATORS TO THE KHMER REPUBLIC IN VERY LONG TIME AND KHMERS WERE VISIBLY PLEASED TO HEAR FROM SENATOR THURMOND PRAISE FOR "THE DETERMINATION AND GALLANTRY WITH WHICH THIS SMALL NATION HAS RESISTED COMMUNIST AGGRESSION", AN ASSESSMENT QUITE CONTRARY TO THE OFTEN UNJUSTIFIED CRITICISM THE KHMERS HAVE HEARD FROM AMERICAN OPPONENTS OR UNFRIENDLY PRESS OVER LAST COUPLE OF

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PAGE 02 STATE 002670

YEARS. SENATOR THURMOND WAS CLEARLY IN CHARGE OF VISIT

AND SENATOR SCOTT TOOK BACK SEAT ALL DURING THE DAY.

2. SENATORS FIRST MET WITH AMERICAN COUNTRY TEAM AND THEN SPENT 3 1/2 HOURS WITH LON NOL AND SENIOR KHMER OFFICIALS AT CHAMCAR MON WHERE MARSHAL DECORATED THURMOND AND HOSTED LUNCHEON FOR THE VISITORS. SENATOR THURMOND AND WIFE ALSO VISITED REFUGEE SITE SOUTHWEST OF CITY WHERE HE TALKED THROUGH INTERPRETER WITH DESTITUTE CIVILIANS WHO HAD JUST FLED FROM KC TERRORISM AND HAD THEIR HOUSES BURNT FIVE MILES FROM WHERE SENATOR INTERVIEWED THE REFUGEES. PRIME MINISTER, FANK COMMANDER SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ AND I WERE WITH THURMOND ON THIS VISIT, WHICH BROUGHT HOME TO HIM NEED FOR ADEQUATE U.S. SUPPORT FOR GKR MORE THAN ALL THE BRIEFINGS WE COULD GIVE HIM. THE CONSTANT ARTILLERY THE TWO SENATORS HEARD ALL DURING THEIR VISIT (WHICH WAS NEEDED TO KEEP KC AT BAY) GAVE THE LEGISLATORS A MORE REALISTIC UNDERSTANDING OF FANK'S AMMUNITION REQUIREMENTS AND WHY GKR NEEDED SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS.

3. SENATOR THURMOND WAS A STAUNCH ADVOCATE OF GKR CAUSE WELL BEFORE EVER SETTING FOOT ON CAMBODIAN SOIL. IN MY CONVERSATIONS WITH HIM I EMPHASIZED PRESIDENT FORD'S STATEMENT MADE IN VAIL DECEMBER 30 ON SIGNING THE 1974 FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT IN WHICH HE EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE LEVELS FOR CAMBODIA ARE INADEQUATE TO MEET MINIMUM BASIC NEEDS AND THAT HE INTENDED TO DISCUSS THIS CRITICAL ISSUE WITH CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE TIME. BZJORE BOARDING HIS PLANE, SENATOR THURMOND SAID TO ME THAT I COULD TELL SECRETARY KISSINGER THAT HE WOULD STRONGLY SUPPORT ADMINISTRATION'S REQUEST FOR APPROPRIATIONS OF ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR CAMBODIA "TO GIVE KHMER MILITARY THE NEEDED AMMUNITION TO BRING WAR TO A SUCCESSFUL ENDING."

4. IT IS MY HOPE THAT THE FIRSTHAND LOOK SENATOR HAD AT WHAT IS GOING ON HERE WILL GIVE HIM ADDITIONAL AUTHORITY IN DEFENDING FUTURE REQUEST FOR SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR CAMBODIA. AMONG THE ARGUMENTS I CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 002670

SUGGESTED TO SENATOR WHICH MIGHT BE EFFECTIVE IN CONVINCING SOME OF HIS MORE SKEPTICAL COLLEAGUES WAS EMPHASIS THAT STRENGTHENING KHMER MILITARY POSITION WOULD HELP BRING ABOUT EARLY NEGOTIATIONS WHICH IS GOAL OF U.S. POLICY HERE. SECONDLY, I SAID CAMBODIA IS RICH COUNTRY, AND ONCE FIGHTING CAME TO A HALT, AND ONCE LOCAL PRODUCTION RESTORED, U.S. ASSISTANCE COULD BE GREATLY REDUCED. IN SHORT, I STRESSED NEED FOR AD-

DITIONAL FUNDS NOW TO SAVE MONEY IN THE LONG RUN. WHILE
SENATOR THURMOND WAS NOT PARTICULARLY ENAMORED WITH
POSSIBLE COMPROMISE SOLUTION HERE, HE NEVERTHELESS
UNDERSTOOD THAT REALISTICALLY THAT WAS PROBABLY THE
BEST THAT WAS OBTAINABLE HERE.
DEAN

UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CODELS, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE002670
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: SB
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750005-0919
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750172/aaaacliu.tel
Line Count: 123
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 JUL 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <12 NOV 2003 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SENATOR THURMOND'S VISIT TO PHNOM PENH
TAGS: PFOR, OREP, CB, US, (THURMOND, STROM), (SCOTT)
To: CINCPAC
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006